

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1                   1.     A consumable management device comprising:  
2                    an interface configured to receive a first message including a first  
3 designation identifying an imaging consumable used by an image forming device  
4 to form hard images; and  
5                    processing circuitry coupled with the interface, the processing  
6 circuitry being configured to convert the first designation identifying the imaging  
7 consumable to a second designation identifying the imaging consumable, to  
8 generate a second message including the second designation, and to forward the  
9 second message to the interface for communication to an entity for assisting with  
10 replenishment of the imaging consumable.

1                   2.     The device in accordance with claim 1 wherein the interface  
2 is configured to receive another first message including another first designation  
3 identifying another imaging consumable, and the processing circuitry is configured  
4 to convert the another first designation into another second designation identifying  
5 the another imaging consumable, and to generate the second message comprising  
6 a list including the second designations.

1                   3.     The device in accordance with claim 1 wherein the processing  
2 circuitry is configured to generate the second message comprising a quantity  
3 corresponding to the imaging consumable identified by the second designation.

1                   4.     The device in accordance with claim 1 wherein the processing  
2 circuitry is configured to generate the second message comprising an email  
3 message and to include the second designation as an attachment of the email.

1           5.     The device in accordance with claim 1 wherein the processing  
2     circuitry is configured to convert the first designation comprising a manufacturer  
3     part number for the imaging consumable to the second designation comprising a  
4     customer part number for the imaging consumable.

1           6.     The device in accordance with claim 1 further comprising  
2     storage circuitry configured to store a look-up table, and the processing circuitry  
3     is configured to access the look-up table to convert the first designation to the  
4     second designation.

1           7.     The device in accordance with claim 1 wherein the processing  
2     circuitry is configured to export the second designations into one of a plurality of  
3     formats corresponding to the entity to generate the second message.

1           8.     The device in accordance with claim 1 wherein the processing  
2     circuitry is configured to communicate the second message at a predetermined  
3     moment in time.

1           9.     An image forming system comprising:  
2             an image forming device configured to use an imaging consumable  
3     to form hard images, to monitor the status of the imaging consumable, and to  
4     generate a first message including a first designation identifying the imaging  
5     consumable responsive to the monitoring; and

6             a consumable management device coupled with the image forming  
7     device and configured to receive the first message, to convert the first designation  
8     identifying the imaging consumable to a second designation identifying the imaging  
9     consumable, and to communicate a second message including the second  
10    designation to an entity for assisting with replenishment of the imaging  
11    consumable.

1           10. The system in accordance with claim 9 wherein the  
2 consumable management device is configured to receive another first message  
3 including another first designation identifying another imaging consumable, to  
4 convert the another first designation into another second designation identifying  
5 the another imaging consumable, and to generate the second message comprising  
6 a list including the second designations.

1           11. The system in accordance with claim 9 wherein the  
2 consumable management device is configured to generate the second message  
3 comprising an email message and to include the second designation as an  
4 attachment of the email.

1           12. The system in accordance with claim 9 wherein the  
2 consumable management device is configured to covert the first designation  
3 comprising a manufacturer part number for the imaging consumable to the second  
4 designation comprising a customer part number for the imaging consumable.

1           13. The system in accordance with claim 9 wherein the image  
2 forming device comprises a printer.

1           14. A method of replenishing an imaging consumable usable to  
2 form hard images, the method comprising:

3           receiving a first message including a first designation identifying the  
4 imaging consumable;

5           converting the first designation to a second designation different than  
6 the first designation, the second designation identifying the imaging consumable;

7           generating a second message including the second designation; and

8           communicating the second message including the second designation  
9 to an entity for assisting with replenishment of the imaging consumable.

1           15. The method in accordance with claim 14 wherein the  
2 generating comprises generating the second message comprising a list including  
3 a plurality of different second designations identifying a plurality of different  
4 respective imaging consumables.

1           16. The method in accordance with claim 14 wherein the  
2 generating comprises generating the second message including a quantity  
3 corresponding to the imaging consumable identified by the second designation.

1           17. The method in accordance with claim 14 wherein the  
2 generating comprises:  
3           generating the second message comprising an email message; and  
4           providing the second designation as an attachment of the email  
5 message.

1           18. The method in accordance with claim 14 wherein the  
2 converting comprises converting the first designation comprising a manufacturer  
3 part number for the imaging consumable to the second designation comprising a  
4 customer part number for the imaging consumable.

1           19. The method in accordance with claim 14 wherein the  
2 generating comprises exporting the second designation into one of a plurality of  
3 formats corresponding to the entity.

1           20. The method in accordance with claim 14 wherein the  
2 communicating comprises communicating at a predetermined moment in time.